



FEMA

Buyouts Bring Relief to Butler County

Butler County, KS – Historical Flooding, dating back as far as the 1930s, kept many homes in the City of Augusta and the town of Andover on the repetitive flooding list. Floods resulted from a major river near one community and a creek near the other.

On October 31, 1998, the Whitewater River and the Walnut River, located on both sides of Augusta, converged and flooded the community. The problem was amplified for the county by a watershed that consists of several smaller creeks, including the Four Mile Creek, which is south of the City of Andover.

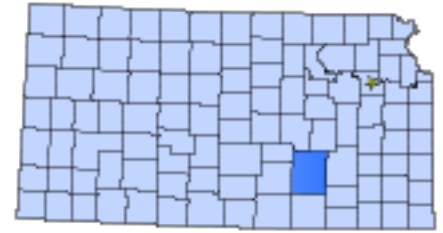
Using Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), the city of Augusta received \$1.8 million and used it to buy out 32 of 36 houses that flooded on Sunflower Street, leaving two houses on each side of the street. Other options available to homeowners included elevating the existing home, relocating the house to a higher elevation, or simply staying put and hoping for the best.

Under the terms of the HMGP, substantially damaged (more than 50 percent) structures may be purchased and demolished and the land returned to "open space" with no residential or commercial building allowed. The local jurisdiction agrees to own and maintain the land indefinitely. The process took three years to accomplish in Augusta; it was completed in 2001. The city's current plans are to turn most of Sunflower Street into a cul-de-sac park area with scenic walking paths.

David Alfaro, director of economic development and former assistant Augusta city manager, estimated that the city saved \$180,000 in 2007 when the open area flooded again.

South of Andover in the Bridlewood Addition along Four Mile Creek, some houses had been sold more than six times with the buyers unaware that they were living in a floodplain. As Wichita became more commercialized, the flooding in Andover worsened.

The FEMA buyout in Andover involved 15 homes out of 20 affected by the disaster. The town received almost \$2.5 million from the federal government, and the open land in Andover has become a wildlife preserve, providing food for wild turkeys, deer, and, occasionally, pastureland for horses.



**Butler County,
Kansas**



Quick Facts

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$4,300,000.00 (Estimated)

Primary Activity/Project:

Acquisition/Buyouts

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)